

NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

September 20, 2011
Environmental Laboratory
Richards and Robbins Building
Dover, DE 19901
9:00a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council Members:

John Williams, Chair
Jennifer Adkins
Peter Martin
Debbie Heaton
Dean Holden

Guests:

Ginger North, DNS

Staff:

Robert Line, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Eileen Butler, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

I. Call to Order/Announcements

Mr. Williams, Chairperson, called the Natural Areas Advisory Council meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. He welcomed Council members, and staff and asked for announcements.

II. Approval of Minutes of Meeting

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the June 7, 2011 meeting minutes. Council approved the minutes as read.

Ms. Adkins thanked Ms. Butler for writing the By-Laws clearly and concisely.

Ms. Butler said Mr. Williams corrected the revised By-laws by adding '**amended as of June 7, 2011' and effective January 1, 2012.** Ms. Butler will resend the corrected version.

III. Old Business

None.

IV. Natural Areas Registry

No new changes.

V. Nature Preserve Dedications

No new changes

VI. Nature Preserve Management Issues

Staff is developing the Pea Patch Island Management Plans and will be meeting with Parks staff for a final review of the Plan.

Fork Branch Nature Preserve Management Plan was sent out to Council members via email for review and comment. Mr. Williams asked for a motion to accept the draft Fork Branch Management Plan. Ms. Adkins made a motion that Council accept the Division's recommendation of this Management Plan as consistent with the Articles of Dedication. Mr. Pete Martin seconded the

motion - motion passed.

Field Trip – Mr. Robert Line guided the Council on a field trip through parts of Fork Branch Nature Preserve. Mr. Line is a Natural Resource Specialist for the Division's Environmental Stewardship Program (ESP). ESP contributes significantly to the development of the Management Plans throughout the Nature Preserve System.

Mr. Line said the Fork Branch Nature Preserve is one of the few sites that do not have invasive species and therefore is very easy to defend. The main objective is to get fragmites, a common reed, under control.

Mr. Line welcomed questions from Council. He said we are heading into a century where the future management of preserves is in flux and the management of such ecosystems will be challenging.

VII. New Business

Ms. Ginger North reminded Council that the Delaware Nature Society received a 57-acre donation in Sussex County along the Johnson Branch from the Isaacs-Greene families. DNS and Parks are working together to place an easement on the property and dedicate this tract of land as part of the Milford-Millpond Nature Preserve. A celebration is planned for October 15, 2011 at Abbotts Nature Center.

VIII. Public Comment and Synopsis Reports From Other Councils, Stakeholders, and Partners

Mr. Williams said the State Parks Council held their meeting on August 5, 2011. Some of the highlights included: trail plans for the Gordons Pond area; the successful summer concert series; the new tiger at the Brandywine Zoo; converting tennis courts at Deerfield into parking lots; and the child in nature initiative which promotes Eat/Munch Better at the Parks.

Ms. Adkins noted that the State of Delaware's Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee is looking at the vulnerability of lands and resources in the state to sea level rise, including Delaware Natural Areas. Ms. Butler offered to host a discussion on the effects of sea level rise on Delaware Natural Areas at a future Council meeting.

IX. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next Natural Areas Advisory Council meeting will be held on December 6, 2011 at DNREC's Environmental Laboratory, in the Richards and Robbins Building, Dover, DE, starting 9:00 am.

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.